

## Message Text

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ACTION ARA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-03 H-02 INR-07 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 /056 W

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R 191500Z JUN 75

FM AMEMBASSY MANAGUA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7245

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 MANAGUA 2381

EO 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, NU

SUBJECT: FERNANDO AGUERO RETURNS TO POLITICAL WARS

SUMMARY: AFTER A LONG ABSENCE FROM ACTIVE POLITICS, FERNANDO AGUERO ROCHA, THE PRINCIPAL OPPOSITION FIGURE OF THE IMMEDIATE PRE-EARTHQUAKE PERIOD, STAGED A ROUSING POLITICAL RALLY NEAR MASAYA ON JUNE 15. THE AGUERO CAMP SEES THIS AS THE BEGINNING OF RENEWED ACTIVITY TO PUT THEIR MAN ON THE COMEBACK TRAIL. ALTHOUGH, AS DEMONSTRATED AT THE MASAYA RALLY, AGUERO RETAINS THE LOYALTY OF A RELATIVELY LARGE NUMBER OF SUPPORTERS MAKING HIM A FORCE TO BE RECKONED WITH, HE IS UNLIKELY TO ADD MUCH TO HIS BASIC SUPPORT GROUP. BY HOLDING HIS ORGANIZATION TOGETHER, HOWEVER, HE MAINTAINS THE OPTION OF ONE DAY THROUWING IN WITH THE UDEL COALITION WHICH WOULD CONSIDERABLY STRENGTHEN THE HAND OF ANTI-SOMOZA FORCES. ANOTHER PLOY FAVORED BY AGUERO, THAT OF BUILDING TIES TO THE NATIONAL GUARD IN HOPES THAT IT WILL EVENTUALLY TURN ON SOMOZA, IS LESS LIKELY TO BEAR FRUIT.

1. AFTER MANY MONTHS OF POLITICAL INACTIVITY, CONSERVATIVE PARTY FOLLOWERS OF FERNANDO AGUERO ROCHA STAGED AN ENTHUSIASTIC AND CONSPICUOUS RALLY AT MASAYA ON JUNE 15. A MOSTLY CAMPESINO CROWD OF PERHAPS 4,000 GAVE THE FORMER NATIONAL GOVERNING COUNCIL MEMBER A ROUSING RECEPTION WHICH SEEMINGLY BELIED THE MANY POSTMORTEMS ON HIS POLITICAL CAREER. DEDRIDING OPPOSITION GROUP UDEL (UNION DEMOCRATICA DE LIBERACION) FOR HOLDING THEIR PUBLIC MEETINGS IN OUT-OF-THE-  
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WAY SITES, THE AGUERISTAS HELD FORTH NEAR MASAYA ON ONE OF

NICARAGUA'S BUSIEST HIGHWAYS, MANAGING TO TIE UP WEEKEND TRAFFIC (INCLUDING, IRONICALLY, PRESIDENT SOMOZA'S CORTEGE).

2. AGUERO'S SPEECH DEMONSTRATED THAT HIS FAMOUS ORATORICAL SKILLS, ALTHOUGH A BIT RUSTY, HAVE NOT FADED WITH DISUSE. DELIVERING A PAEAN TO DEMOCRACY BEGINNING WITH EARLY GREEK AND ROMAN HISTORY AND TAKEN ON THROUGH ABRAHAM LINCOLN AND JOHN F. KENNEDY, AGUERO CHARACTERIZED SOMOZA AS THE CALIGULA OF NICARAGUAN EXPERIENCE SLAMMING HIS CORRUPTION AND AUTHORITARIANISM. THE US WAS PRAISED FOR ITS DEMOCRATIC INSTITUTIONS, BUT TAKEN TO TASK FOR NOT ENCOURAGING DEMOCRACY ABROAD. OLIGARCHIES IN GENERAL AND THE CONSERVATIVE GRANADINO ARISTOCRATS, WHO AGUERO CREDITS WITH ENGINEERING THE INTRA-PARTY COUP AGAINST HIM IN 1973, IN PARTICULAR WERE ALSO HARSHLY ATTACKED.

3. ALTHOUGH SEVERAL PLACARDS AROUND THE RALLY SITE ATTACKED UDEL LEADER PEDRO JOAQUIN CHAMORRO'S NEWSPAPER LA PRENSA, AGUERO DOWNPLAYED HIS DIFFERENCES WITH THE UDELISTAS, LIMITING HIMSELF TO DEPLORING THE ADVANCE OF COMMUNISM IN NICARAGUA (THE COMMUNIST PARTY AND LABOR CONFEDERATION ARE MEMBERS OF THE UDEL COALITION). ANOTHER KEY THEME OF THE SPEECH (WHICH WAS ECHOED IN PLACARDS) CAME THROUGH IN SOME VERY WARM WORDS FOR THE NATIONAL GUARD WHICH AGUERO SEES PLAYING A CENTRAL ROLE IN REMOVING SOMOZA FROM THE SCENE, AND WITH WHICH HE IS MUCH INTERESTED IN CULTIVATING CONTACT.

4. DESPITE THE STATE OF SIEGE, THE RATHER HIGH PROFILE AGUERO RALLY WENT OFF WITH NO APPARENT ATTEMPT BY THE NATIONAL GUARD TO HINDER IT. AGUERISTAS FROM BOACO DID CLAIM GUARDIA PREVENTED TRUCKS CARRYING PARTICIPANTS FROM THEIR AREA FROM COMING, BUT THIS WAS THE ONLY ASSERTION OF GON HARRASSMENT HEARD AT THE RALLY. SEVERAL OF THOSE RESPONSIBLE FOR ORGANIZING THE EVENT WERE JUBILANT TO POLOFF OVER SIZE OF GATHERING EMPHASIZING THAT THIS WAS ACCOMPLISHED WITHOUT BENEFIT OF PUBLICITY. A LEFTIST REPORTER COVERING RALLY WAS LESS GENEROUS, SAYING IT WAS ONLY ANOTHER DEMONSTRATION OF USUAL LIBERAL AND CONSERVATIVE PARTY PRACTICE WHEREIN POLITICIAN LANDOWNERS CART IN CAMPESINOS WHO WORK FOR THEM FOR COMMAND PERFORMANCE. MUCH OF CROWD (PERHAPS 50 PCT) WAS

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THERE AT INSTIGATION OF STILL INFLUENTIAL CONSERVATIVE CACIQUE IN NEARBY MASAYA, ARNALDO LACAYO MAISON, WHO IS VICE PRESIDENT OF AGUERO FACTION.

5. COMMENT: RENEWED POLITICAL ACTIVITY BY AGUERO IS IN PART OWNED TO HIS CONCERN OVER INROADS MADE BY UDEL TOWARD ASSUMING BANNER AS PRINCIPAL OPPOSITION SPOKESMAN. WHETHER OR NOT THE MASYA RALLY MARKS THE BEGINNING OF THE COMEBACK

TRAIL FOR AGUERO, HE AND HIS FOLLOWERS SEEM INTENT ON LAUNCHING A GENERAL REORGANIZATION EFFORT TO INCLUDE MORE MEETINGS OF THIS KIND. IN OUR VIEW, IT IS UNLIKELY THAT THIS ATTEMPT WILL GO VERY FAR.

6. WHILE, AS THE MASAYA RALLY PROVED, AGUERO STILL MAINTAINS A CHARISMATIC HOLD OVER A LARGE NUMBER OF SUPPORTERS, HE IS, TO A GREAT EXTENT, DISCREDITED WITHIN THE LARGER ANTI-SOMOZA POOL, AND UNLIKELY, THEREFORE, TO ADD TO HIS BASIC SUPPORT GROUP. ON THE OTHER HAND, BECAUSE OF THE PERHAPS IRREDUCIBLE MINIMUM OF HIS SUPPORT, HE IS STILL A FORCE TO BE RECKONED WITH

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ACTION ARA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-03 H-02 INR-07 L-03

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R 191500Z JUN 75

FM AMEMBASSY MANAGUA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7246

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 MANAGUA 2381

AND MAY HAVE A FEW IMPORTANT CARDS LEFT TO PLAY. FOR EXAMPLE, ALTHOUGH MOST ARE SKEPTICAL OF AGUERO'S ABILITY TO COOPERATE WITH OTHER ANTI-SOMOZA ELEMENTS, HIS RELATIVELY SOFT-LINE APPROACH TOWARD UDEL AT MASAYA FOLLOWED A DAY LATER BY THE RATHER IMPASSIONED (ALBEIT UNSPECIFIC) PREACHING OF THE UNITY THEME BY ONE OF HIS CHIEF LIEUTENANTS ATTENDING A SOCIAL FUNCTION WITH SEVERAL UDEL LEADERS, HINTS AT A POSSIBLE NEW DIRECTION FOR THE AGUERO MOVEMENT.

7. REGARDING HIS REMARKS ABOUT THE NATIONAL GUARD, NEARLY ALL OPPOSITION LEADERS STRAPPED AT FORMULATING A CONVINCING SCENARIO TO COME TO POWER IN THE FACE OF SOMOZA'S CONTROL OF THE ELECTORAL MECHANISM, ETC., HAVE ALMOST WISTFULLY ALLUDED TO POSSIBLE ASSISTANCE BY DISENCHANGED NATIONAL GUARD ELEMENTS. ALTHOUGH AGUERO HAS ASSIDUOUSLY COURTED GUARD OFFICERS MORE SERIOUSLY THAN MOST, THE MASAYA RALLY MARKED THE FIRST TIME HE HAS BEEN SO PUBLICLY EXPLICIT ABOUT

IT. HOWEVER, IF THERE IS ANY REAL SYMPATHY FOR THE OPPOSITION  
ABOVE THE CAPTAIN LEVEL OF THE GUARD, WE HAVE NOT HEARD OF  
IT. WHILE THERE MAY BE SOME LATENT SUPPORT BELOW THAT LEVEL,  
THE ORGANIZATION OF THE ARMED FORCES WOULD SEEM TO PRECLUDE  
IT FROM BEING EFFECTIVELY MANIFESTED IN THE FORESEEABLE  
FUTURE.  
SHELTON

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